

REMARKS

This letter is responsive to the office action dated August 23, 2005. Claims 1-31 are pending in the application.

The abstract has been amended to remove the phrases objected to by the Examiner. Paragraph [0045] of the specification has been amended to correct a minor clerical error.

Claims 6, 12, 15-18, 21-22, 25, and 28-31 are canceled, without prejudice. Claims 5, 11, 19, 24, and 27 have been amended. New claims 32-53 have been added. No new matter has been added. The claims now of record recite allowable subject matter as indicated at paragraph 10 of the office action.

In that paragraph, the Examiner indicates that original claims 22 and 27-29 would be allowed if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Original claim 22 has been rewritten in independent form, as amended claim 1. Amended claim 1 incorporates all of the limitations of original claim 22 and the claims on which it depended (i.e. original claims 1, 18, and 21). Accordingly, we respectfully submit that amended claim 1 is now in form for allowance. Dependent claims 2-5, 7-11, 13-14, 19-20, 23-24, and 26-27 (with claims 5, 11, 19, 24, and 27 amended to recite terms consistent with the incorporated limitations of amended claim 1) are also patentable as they depend on amended claim 1, which is based on original claim 22.

Original claim 27 has also been rewritten in independent form, as new claim 32, and original claim 28 has been rewritten as new dependent claim 33. New claim 32 includes all of the limitations of original claim 27 and the claims on which it

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depended (i.e. original claims 1 and 26). Accordingly, we respectfully submit that new claims 32 and 33 are now in form for allowance. New dependent claims 34-52 have also been added reciting the features in original dependent claims 2-5, 7-11, 13-20, and 23-24. These new dependent claims are also patentable as they depend on new claim 32, which is based on original claim 27.

Original claim 29 has also been rewritten in independent form, as new claim 53. New claim 53 includes all of the limitations of original claim 29 and the claims on which it depended (i.e. original claim 1). Accordingly, we respectfully submit that new claim 53 is also now in form for allowance.

The Applicant respectfully submits that the claims remaining in the application, namely claims 1-5, 7-11, 13-14, 19-20, 23-24, 26-27, and 32-53, are patentable for the foregoing reasons. Furthermore, it is respectfully submitted that the objections raised in paragraphs 3-9 of the office action are now moot in view of the amendments made. However, the Applicants reserve the right to address the merit of these objections should they be raised in respect of an examination of claims in a continuation, continuation-in-part, or divisional of the present application.

If the Examiner believes that a telephone interview would expedite allowance of the application, she is respectfully invited to contact the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,
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